

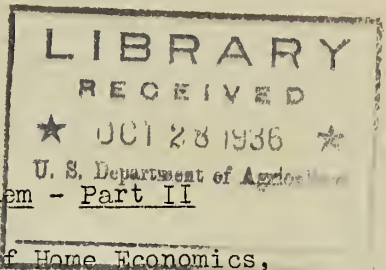
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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR



Old-fashioned Herbs -- How to Grow and Use Them -- Part II

A dialogue between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Wednesday, October 14, 1936.

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MR. SALISBURY: Now, to continue with the interesting account of old-fashioned herbs that Miss Van Deman and Mr. Beattie were giving last Thursday. Let's see, Ruth, I think you and Mr. Beattie had gone through the B's and the C's in the herb alphabet. I remember you'd talked about basil and chives. Basil was a new one to me.

MISS VAN DEMAN: And have you tried chives on broiled beefsteak yet?

MR. SALISBURY: No, not yet. But be careful the way you go describing broiled beefsteak at this hour. I haven't had any lunch yet.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Oh, I see you're hinting that you could use a steak with or without a dressing of chives. Well, I'll desist about the chives and steak, but I do want to add a word about dill -- the fresh dill leaves. As I was saying last week, Miss Birdseye who's quite an epicure as well as a nutrition specialist, thinks that there's nothing like the finely chopped tender young leaves of the dill plant to give a delicious flavor to creamed chicken or shrimp or creamed eggs. She also recommends very highly sprinkling the chopped dill leaves over broiled or fried fish, or a meat like veal cutlet, and then pouring on a little of the hot fat from the skillet to bring out the dill flavor. And scrambled eggs, she says, are very, very good with some of the chopped dill leaves cooked in them.

Well, Mr. Beattie, what's next on your list?

MR. BEATTIE: Well, there's fennel, very popular in Italy and that part of the world.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, I've eaten it as a vegetable over there. But fennel is one of the flavors most people have to cultivate a taste for. It's harder even than learning to like green olives.

MR. BEATTIE: Yes, I think we can skip over fennel. And also horehound. It needs only a word in passing. Not many of us want to make our own horehound candy.

But when it comes to marjoram, sweet marjoram as it's often called, that's one of the nicest little aromatic plants I know. It flourishes in

(over)

good garden soil and can be grown either as a perennial or as an annual. The main reason for growing sweet marjoram as an annual is that winter kills it in cold climates unless the plants are well covered. The seeds are small and hard to start, and so it is often best to begin with cuttings. Sweet marjoram is also one of the best herbs to grow as a potted plant indoors. Insects don't seem to bother it, and it doesn't seem to mind the dry air of the house in winter.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Fine. I like Marjoram very much as a seasoning for meat soups, and stew, and meat pies, and for stuffing. A pot of it on the kitchen window sill would be a great help. All you need are a few sprigs to flavor a meat dish.

Well, Mr. Beattie, M also stands for mint.

MR. BEATTIE: Yes, a whole family of mints. Spearmint, peppermint, apple mint, orange mint, horsemint, curly mint, water mint. There are about 40 species of mints growing in various parts of the world. They all have that characteristic minty odor when you bruise the leaves, and they all have a square stalk. And they do not like lime in the soil.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Then they don't want to be alkalinized. Acidosis doesn't bother them.

MR. BEATTIE: No, if you were a mint plant and you got too much alkali, you'd turn yellow and die. Mint plants do well in a clay soil or a rich garden loam. Most of the big commercial peppermint fields are on black muck land in the Great Lakes Region. Once you get a mint bed well started, you'll have difficulty in keeping it within bounds. Mint spreads by creeping root stalks. That's the way it's propagated -- by dividing the plants or making cuttings from the root stalks. Some of the mints don't produce seed, and even with those that do the seed is not certain to germinate. It's well to shear a mint bed occasionally. Then the plants will send up young tender shoots. The kind you want, Miss Van Deman, for your iced tea and your garnishes.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, and to put into stuffing for a roast boned shoulder of lamb. Ever have that?

MR. BEATTIE: No, don't think I have. We like mint sauce with roast lamb -- the leaves chopped and added to hot vinegar with a little sugar.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, that's good, but I think the fresh mint put into the bread-crumbs stuffing is even better. We have a recipe for it in our lamb leaflet, and it's been very popular.

MR. SALISBURY: That sounds good, Ruth. Almost as good as the beef-steak with that top dressing of chives.

Now, I'm very sorry but I'm going to have to interrupt you people today - - - - -

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